AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 6, 11-17, 22, 24 and 30 without prejudice or disclaimer.

1. (Currently amended) An enterprise system, comprising:

a plurality of artifacts; ~~and~~

a smart distance between said plurality of artifacts; and

a processing device for determining said smart distance between said plurality of artifacts according to a predetermined algorithm, said algorithm comprising:

representing a distance from artifact a_i to artifact a_j as a vector $d_{ij} = \langle | c_1 |, \cdots, | c_{I_{ij}} | \rangle$;

representing a distance configuration at time τ by a matrix $D(\tau) = \begin{pmatrix} d_{11}(\tau), \cdots, d_{1n}(\tau) \\ \cdots \\ d_{n1}(\tau), \cdots, d_{nn}(\tau) \end{pmatrix}$; and

minimizing $\| D(\tau) - D_{natural}(\Omega(\tau)) \|$,

wherein an interaction between said artifacts comprises channels $c_1, \ldots c_{Iij}$, $|c_{Iij}|$ comprises a degree of interaction for a channel c_{Iij}, $\Omega(\tau)$ comprises a given contextual/ environmental condition at time τ, and $D_{natural}(\Omega(\tau))$ comprises a natural distance configuration.

2. (Original) The enterprise system according to claim 1, wherein said enterprise system comprises a virtual enterprise system.

3. (Original) The enterprise system according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of artifacts comprise at least one of a person, an object, a database, an autonomous element, an intelligent agent, and an information system.

4. (Original) The enterprise system according to claim 1, wherein a plurality of interactions are formed between artifacts in said plurality of artifacts, said interactions comprising at least one of a video channel, an audio channel and a text channel.

5. (Original) The enterprise system according to claim 1, wherein said smart distance comprises an optimal degree of awareness, communication and interaction between artifacts in said plurality of artifacts.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Original) The enterprise system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a smart distance enabled adaptive document community, and wherein said plurality of artifacts comprises at least one adaptive document.

8. (Original) The enterprise system according to claim 7, wherein said smart distance comprises a distance between said at least one adaptive document and one of a person, an agent, and another adaptive document.

9. (Original) The enterprise system according to claim 7, wherein said at least one adaptive document comprises a local registry.

10. (Original) The enterprise system according to claim 9, further comprising:

a global awareness server,

wherein said adaptive document interacts with other artifacts via said global awareness server.

11-17. (Canceled)

18-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended) A method for providing a smart distance among artifacts of an enterprise system, comprising:

providing a plurality of artifacts; and

calculating a smart distance between said plurality of artifacts <u>using a processing device, said calculating said smart distance comprising:</u>

representing a distance from artifact a_i to artifact a_j as a vector $d_{ij} = \langle | c_1 |, \cdots, | c_{I_{ij}} | \rangle$;

representing a distance configuration at time τ by a matrix $D(\tau) = \begin{pmatrix} d_{11}(\tau), \cdots, d_{1n}(\tau) \\ \cdots \\ d_{n1}(\tau), \cdots, d_{nn}(\tau) \end{pmatrix}$; and

minimizing $\| D(\tau) - D_{natural}(\Omega(\tau)) \|$, and

wherein an interaction between said artifacts comprises channels $c_1, \ldots c_{Iij}$, $|c_{Iij}|$ comprises a degree of interaction for channel c_{Iij}, $\Omega(\tau)$ comprises a given contextual/environmental condition at time τ, and $D_{natural}(\Omega(\tau))$ comprises a natural distance configuration.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Currently amended) A virtual enterprise system, comprising:

at least one processing device for determining a smart distance between artifacts using contextual information and a smart distance preference, said smart distance being determined relative to other smart distances between artifacts in said enterprise system; and

a state machine operatively coupled to said at least one processing device, for capturing said contextual information; and

a local registry, operatively coupled to said at least one processing device, for recording said smart distance preference.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Original) The virtual enterprise system according to claim 23, wherein said virtual enterprise system comprises an engineering and construction (E&C) resource management system, which controls resource acquisition and procurement and resource allocation and scheduling, optimally manages a supply chain including changes from various unexpected events, controls and optimizes distributed resources at both individual project level and global level, and manages risk.

26. (Original) The virtual enterprise system according to claim 23, wherein said smart distance comprises a distance between employees, partners, vendors, and customers in a virtual enterprise system.

27. (Original) The virtual enterprise system according to claim 23, further comprising:

a graphical user interface for displaying a smart distance enabled view.

28-29. (Canceled)

30. (Canceled)

31-33. (Canceled)